

CLINICAL NOTE

THE "HIP-POINTER"

A Term to Describe a Specific Kind of Athletic Injury

MARTIN E. BLAZINA, M.D., *Los Angeles*

A TERM COMMONLY USED in athletic injuries is *hip-pointer*. Unfortunately, the injury it is used to describe actually involves the iliac crest, not the hip; and the term has also been used to designate a variety of injuries occurring in the region of the iliac crest. In order to standardize the nomenclature of athletic injuries and preserve the integrity of this term in reporting and recording *hip-pointer* should be arbitrarily restricted to a contusion of the iliac crest.*

The strains involving the various muscles attaching to the iliac crest are not to be included in this meaning and must be recorded separately. The injury causing a hip-pointer is always a direct blow, whereas muscular strains or avulsion fractures are caused by rotatory bending or twisting movements. A fracture of the iliac crest resulting from a direct blow could be ascertained by x-ray examination and diagnosed separately.

In American football a hip-pointer is usually caused by an opponent's knee, head or shoulder, with inadequate or ill-fitting hip pads sometimes being a contributing factor. A person with this injury has severe pain on movement, especially on coughing, deep breathing, sneezing or running and there may be significant disability. Exquisite localized tenderness over the iliac crest is elicited on palpation and there may be ecchymosis and swelling.

If we reserve the usage of the term *hip-pointer* to imply a contusion of the iliac crest only, clarity of reporting is maintained and a commonly used vernacular term is perfectly acceptable in athletic medical terminology.

From the Department of Surgery/Orthopedics, UCLA School of Medicine, Los Angeles.
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Reprint requests to: Department of Surgery, UCLA School of Medicine, Los Angeles 90024 (Dr. Blazina).

*Standard Nomenclature of Athletic Injuries, prepared by the A.M.A. Subcommittee on Classification of Sports Injuries, American Medical Association, Chicago, 1966.

